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Interview #1:
At the Legislative Reference Service
(Wednesday, February 1, 1984)
Interviewed by Donald A. Ritchie

RITCHIE: We're interested in what people's experiences were before they came to the Senate, and how they got to the Senate. I was looking through the records and saw that you were born in Columbus Junction, Iowa, and spent your early years in Iowa. I wondered if you could tell me a little about your family and what they did in Columbus Junction?
WILCOX: Well, that was quite accidental in a way, because we lived in the little town of Montrose, Iowa which was 80 miles south of Columbus Junction. My mother, for some reason which I was not then aware of, obviously, went to Columbus Junction for the birth of her baby. This was where my grandparents lived. She went there and I was born in Columbus Junction, although my family actually lived in Montrose, Iowa.
RITCHIE: Was your father a farmer?
WILCOX: My father was a druggist. He owned and managed a drug store in this little town. I worked in the drug store in my off hours from school, and between high school and college I spent a year working there with him. My job was to run the soda fountain part of the drug store, with the ice cream and candy and all those good

things that drug stores sometimes have. I worked after school and on weekends, trying to help out with the family affairs.
RITCHIE: Did you attend public schools there?
WILCOX: I attended public schools in Montrose, Iowa. As I recall there were 20 students in my graduating class in high school.
RITCHIE: Then you went to the University of Iowa.
WILCOX: Yes.
RITCHIE: I read a tribute that Senator Thomas Martin gave you when you left the Senate. He said that you were a "brilliant student and an outstanding athlete" there.
WILCOX: Well, you know how senators are, they're inclined to exaggerate sometimes--especially when their constituents are involved--and I think he probably did on this occasion! I did reasonably well in my studies and I wasn't that good an athlete, but I was on the varsity team.
RITCHIE: This was early on in the Depression, in the early 1930s. Did that pose any problem about being in college?

WILCOX: It did, because my parents lost what they had in the Depression, and this meant that I had to work my way through school from the very beginning. As you know, it's not easy to work your way

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through college, but you can if you really try. In a way, I suppose it was a handicap; it was also a discipline because I learned the value of money, certainly, and I learned the value of time. I could get my studies taken care of in a relatively short period of time, because I had to. I did all kinds of things: selling programs at football games, and waiting on tables; you name it and I did it. My first couple of years of graduate work I ran a pawn shop with a student in the law school, and we did fairly well on that. But there were a good many kinds of things that I did--including the job of circulation manager of student publications--to get through school.

RITCHIE: I see that you stayed at the University of Iowa for graduate work.

WILCOX: Yes, for three more years.

RITCHIE: What was it that made you decide to go on--in political science, wasn't it?

WILCOX: Yes, it was in political science. I had intended to go into the law, but because of the financial pressures I was under I decided that I could get a doctor's degree more easily than I could get a law degree because I could teach part-time and work my way through in that way. In the law school this is rather difficult to do, for there aren't the same kinds of opportunities in the law school to earn your way through. So I did that, and I stayed at the

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University of Iowa because I had these opportunities which I wouldn't have had if I had gone elsewhere. I remember that I wrote to a couple of institutions, Princeton in particular. I was interested in going to Princeton to complete my doctor's work, but they wrote back and said I had a very fine record, but they had only two opportunities and those were taken by people who were already on board, therefore they had nothing to offer. So I decided to stay where I was. Then after that I went to Europe for two years. I got a fellowship from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and I was entitled to go anywhere that I wanted to go to take advanced work. So I went to Europe because I had had seven years of training in a provincial situation and I felt that I needed to broaden my horizons a bit. I went to what was then the best school of international relations in the world, the University of Geneva, L'Institut des Hautes Etudes Internationale, the graduate institute of international studies. It was at the time when the League of Nations was in its hayday, and I learned a tremendous amount--or so I thought, anyway-in a period of two years. But that's the reason I went abroad. While abroad I decided that since I was there for two years, I might just as well qualify for a degree that would be from another institution. So I took my doctor's degree from the University of Geneva. Not that I was hunting for

degrees particularly, but it seemed to me that it would balance off my credentials a little bit to have an advanced degree from another institution.

RITCHIE: When you were at Iowa were you in international studies as part of your political science program?
WILCOX: Yes, my field of study was political science, but because the head of the department came to me one day and said that if I wrote my dissertation in local government, he had the money to publish it. Of course, every doctoral candidate is anxious to have his doctor's thesis published, so I said all right, I would do it. I went from county government--I wrote my doctor's dissertation on the financial administration of county government in Iowa, taking Johnson County, Iowa, as a typical case, and it was subsequently published-then I went from local government to international government, you see, in one big jump.
RITCHIE: But you were tending towards international relations while you were at Iowa?
WILCOX: Yes. Because when I got the fellowship to study somewhere else, I decided that this was what I wanted to do. I had taken several courses in international relations, and I became very much interested in that field. So I chose to go abroad then for my postdoctoral work.
RITCHIE: Did you do another dissertation in Geneva?

WILCOX: Yes. The Ratification of International Conventions. It was published by George Allen and Unwin of London, and was my first book.
RITCHIE: I was curious about the impact of living in Europe in 1933 to 1935, and again in 1937, in such a period of tumult. Do you think that being there then shaped some of your world view?
WILCOX: Oh, there's no question about that. The milieu was an international one, and the graduate institute of international studies, as I said, had the best professors in the world at that time. I became very much interested in the League of Nations and its efforts to work toward world peace. I was there from 1933 until 1935. And, of course, it was a rough time economically. My wife and I got there--we were married just before I left for Europe--we got there in August and some months after that we had word that President Roosevelt had devalued the dollar. That meant that our fellowship was cut almost into half. As a result we had a pretty rough time financing our two years in Europe.
RITCHIE: I was going to ask if you traveled much through Europe while you were there, but that must have held you back.

WILCOX: We traveled some. We took advantage of vacations and went to Italy, for example, and spent some time in Paris. We did travel a bit, although our limited financial resources meant that we had to keep out traveling to a minimum.

RITCHIE: If you were in Italy did you have a chance to get some sense of Mussolini's impact there?
WILCOX: Yes. The grandeur of Mussolini and the fascist regime was apparent. I remember the people were praising him because he "made the trains run on time." Frankly, at that time, my wife was interested in art, and we spent a good deal of time in Florence and other cities in Italy where art collections are reknowned and very famous. But we did, of course, get to attend the discussions in Geneva centered around Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, just before I left Geneva. Of course, that stirred up a lot of concern and question and comment. I remember coming back to the United States and I wrote a series of articles for the paper in Iowa City, where I had gone to school, on the Ethiopian situation.
RITCHIE: What paper was that?
WILCOX: The *Daily Iowan*.
RITCHIE: What was your impression of the League of Nations, when you had a chance to watch it in action?

WILCOX: I suppose like all young people imbued with a certain amount of optimism and hope about the future and about the maintenance of world peace and avoiding another war, I studied the League of Nations with a great deal of interest and hope. I read a great many books about it at that time. The library of the Institute was a very good one and it had many, many volumes on the League of Nations and its weaknesses, its strengths, its hopes, and its aspirations. I read many of those with a great deal of interest. Also, some of the classes were centered primarily on the work of the League of Nations. So I obviously became very much interested in that aspect of world affairs.
RITCHIE: So your feeling at that time was that the League of Nations was performing, it was working?
WILCOX: Well, we watched with hope. And, of course, when the situation in Manchuria developed in 1931 as it did, and then the one in Ethiopia in 1935, we began to have some reservations obviously, as people now have reservations about the United Nations and its capacity to keep world peace. It did not have the means at its disposal, the required will on the part of the states that were members, and the willingness to put down aggression where it occurred.
RITCHIE: Do you think that your experiences watching the League of Nations shaped the way you thought about the United Nations when it was founded?

WILCOX: Yes. I remember drawing up a list of lessons from the League of Nations as we were studying the UN Charter: what were the weaknesses of the League of Nations and to what extent did they charter of the United Nations take into account those weaknesses. So there was no question but what my interest in international organization was stimulated greatly by my experience in Geneva.
RITCHIE: You went back to Europe in 1937 for your Ph.D. at the Hague?

WILCOX: Not for my Ph.D. I went back there for a summer at the Hague Academy of International Law, which is known all over the world for its work in the field of international law. I had a fellowship to go there for the summer. So I spent some time in Berlin and some time at the Hague.
RITCHIE: What was your impression of Berlin in 1937?
WILCOX: Well, you couldn't help but feel that Hitler's efforts were moving the world toward a very serious situation. I remember going down one of the main streets, maybe the Unterdenlinden, I'm not sure now, and seeing great big signs: "Give Me Four Years Time." This was what Hitler was saying in 1937. And, of course, you know what happened in less than four years' time: he had the world at war. So, yes, you couldn't help but feel a great concern about the

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future of Naziism and what this was going to do to Germany and the world, because Hitler's aggressive tactics had already been clearly demonstrated.
RITCHIE: The United States at this time was going through a great debate between internationalism and isolationism. I assume, from your experiences, you tended towards an internationalist view. Is that true, or did you have reservations about America's role in the world?
WILCOX: Well, when you saw the nature of the Hitler regime and the philosophy that characterized its leaders, you couldn't help but feel that this thing had to be stopped some way, otherwise its aggressive designs would either destroy the world or have tremendous adverse impact upon the world. So when Hitler invaded Poland, everybody obviously had to be deeply concerned, and I think the only question then was when and how the United States might become involved, whether we wanted to be involved or not. It was inevitable almost that we should be. We learned two big lessons from World War I and World War II--one big lesson--and that is that if you want to prevent war, the only way to do it is to have those nations interested in keeping the peace band together as we did in the North Atlantic Treaty and say to the world in advance that we would stand together to defend ourselves against possible aggression. That had not been done before World War II, or before World War I. I'm sure that the

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Kaisar would not have launched World War I, and Hitler would not have launched World War II had they been convinced, had they been aware of the probability that the United States would be involved. I think they would have not dared to embark upon hostilities.
RITCHIE: You came from an area, Iowa, that was strongly isolationist. Did you find yourself drawn into any of the debates or did you feel any kind of tension over differences of opinion?
WILCOX: No. On the university campus people tend to be a little more outgoing, a little more liberal, maybe, if I can use that term. A little more internationalist in their approach. Besides, I left Iowa in 1933, and then I did not

go back. I went from Geneva to the University of Louisville to begin my teaching career.
RITCHIE: I just wondered in terms of your personal contacts, family and friends who were still in Iowa?
WILCOX: Well, they're inclined to be a little more conservative in their approach toward world affairs I think, generally, and this is true of the Middle West. I often remind my friends here in Washington there's an awful lot of territory out there, there's an awful lot of economic activity, and this is a tremendously important part of our country, and they shouldn't think that the Atlantic seaboard is the only important place to be. They tend to be a little more isolationist, perhaps.
RITCHIE: When you came back you went to the University of Louisville. How did you happen to locate there?
WILCOX: Well, I located there because I wrote about seventy-five or eighty letters from Geneva to heads of departments of political science in this country, looking for a job. I was not able to find one. I had many nice letters back saying I had a wonderful record, but they had no job opportunities, they were sorry and so on. But one of my former colleagues at the University of Iowa was asked to be the head of the political science department at the University of Louisville. He wrote me and asked if I would come and join him. He said he would handle the national government and the local problems, political parties and matters of that kind, and I would handle the international affairs, American foreign policy, and international relations. Of course, I agreed. The salary was a magnificent two thousand dollars a year, but I was delighted to have it. And we saved money in the process! That's the way I got the job.
RITCHIE: I'm also curious about your teaching about the world in the late 1930s. Did you find yourself getting involved in discussing the international scene as it was unfolding, and the question of the United States' future role?
WILCOX: Oh, yes, of course. In the teaching of international relations and international organizations, the role of the United States obviously came up. There was a good deal of talk about the

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fact that the Senate had refused to approve the Treaty of Versailles. As a result, we had not become a member of the League of Nations. Would the world be different if we had joined the League of Nations and cast our lot with the other countries in an attempt to maintain peace? There was a good deal of talk along those lines in the classroom, and to a certain extent outside. I found a good deal of interest in international relations in the Louisville Women's Club, the Rotary, and the other clubs in the city, and I spoke frequently to them.
RITCHIE: Did you find much America First sentiment among the undergraduates?
WILCOX: Not much at that time, no. I don't think so.

RITCHIE: You pursued an academic career from 1935 to 1942. I noticed that you were a visiting professor at the University of Chicago and the University of Michigan. Did you envision that your career would basically be an academic one?
WILCOX: Yes, my assumption was that it would be. I had thought when I was at the University of Iowa that if I had a full professorship at some good university with a salary of three thousand dollars a year I'd be very happy; that I could buy a house, have a family, and get along very well with a salary of that kind. So I had assumed that my background was such that I would be in the teaching

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field the rest of my life. I did spend a year at the University of Chicago as a visiting fellow. I also taught a graduate seminar at the University of Michigan one summer.
RITCHIE: I see then that in 1942 you came to Washington, and I assume that that had to do with the war. What was it, and who was it, that brought you to Washington?
WILCOX: Well, a friend of mine who is now at the University of Indiana, was with Nelson Rockefeller in the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs Office here in Washington and he wrote me and said that he had a job in his division that he wished I would take. I decided that I did want to get more directly into the war effort, so I came here and my first job was with Nelson Rockefeller. Walter Laves was the individual, now retired from the University of Indiana, who had invited me to come. I felt that the world situation being what it was, I wanted to be involved in a more specific way in the war effort. So I took leave of absence and came to Washington. I intended to stay a year, and I guess I'll have to say the year isn't up yet.
RITCHIE: What did you do at the Office of Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs?
WILCOX: Our job was to do what we could to help the American people understand the nature of the war, and the relationship of the

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Latin American countries to that war effort. We prepared and distributed pamphlets on the war effort and on the role of the Latin countries, the problem of raw materials, and facilities, access to bases, and things of that sort, that helped our people understand better the nature of the conflict that we were in, the global nature of it, and the very positive, constructive role the Latin American countries were playing in that effort.
RITCHIE: Was this a State Department agency?
WILCOX: No, it was a separate agency at the time. It was a war agency. It was related to the State Department in that our tasks were somewhat comparable, but it was not a part of the State Department.
RITCHIE: Did you see much of Nelson Rockefeller at that time?
WILCOX: Not a great deal, because I was down the ladder a little. I saw some of him, and I saw more of him at the United Nations Conference in 1945 in San

Francisco. But I didn't see a great deal of him at that time because he was the boss and I was pretty far down the stepladder.
RITCHIE: He was a pretty young man at that time.
WILCOX: Yes, quite young.
RITCHIE: What was your impression of him?

WILCOX: A very good impression. I had the feeling all along that he had many of the qualities that we needed in the White House, and I supported him at the time he ran for office. I had great admiration for him. When he was vice president he was a member of the Commission on the Organization of the Government for the Conduct of Foreign Policy, which I was the director of. He was an excellent member. I thought his questions were very good, timely, well expressed, and I had great admiration for him.
RITCHIE: How did you find moving to Washington in 1942? I gather that the city was pretty hectic and crowded and growing rapidly because of the war.
WILCOX: My friend wired me to the effect that a friend of his was moving from his apartment in Washington and if I wanted it he could get it for me, but I had to respond right away. So sight unseen we took an apartment in Washington. It was hectic, of course. The rationing problem, the traffic problem, the housing problem, but we enjoyed it very much.
RITCHIE: There was the exhilaration, I guess, as well.
WILCOX: Yes, yes.
RITCHIE: Most people who came at that time always talk about the housing problem.

WILCOX: Yes, the housing problem was a serious one, and we were glad to get whatever was available.
RITCHIE: After you worked for the Office of Coordination of Inter-American Affairs, you moved to the Office of Civilian Defense, in 1943. How did you make that switch?
WILCOX: The Office of Civilian Defense was engaged in the same kind of thing that we were engaged in, a kind of public relations activity in trying to develop a better understanding of the war effort in the country. This was a broader-gauged sort of thing and it seemed natural that our operation should become a part of the Office of Civilian Defense. We broadened our approach towards the war and towards the public understanding of the war.
RITCHIE: When did you get to the Office of Civilian Defense? I was wondering if James Landis was still the director when you were there?
WILCOX: Yes, Jim Landis was still the head of it.
RITCHIE: I'm interested because I wrote a biography of James Landis.
WILCOX: Oh, really? Yes, he was still there.
RITCHIE: Did you have any dealings with him?

WILCOX: Some, not a great deal. He was a pretty good administrator. I didn't have any very extensive contacts with him, again because I was not a senior member of the administrative team. But he seemed to be doing a good job in the Civilian Defense organization and certainly he was a very capable man, there's no question about it.
RITCHIE: He was something of a difficult man to work with.
WILCOX: A difficult man, yes, he had his peculiarities. But he was an able lawyer and an able person.
RITCHIE: The Office of Civilian Defense was one of the most controversial assignments that he had, because it had to cover so much and it got bad publicity when Mrs. Roosevelt was organizing lunchtime dancing on the roof of the headquarters.
WILCOX: That's right.
RITCHIE: Which division did you work under? I know that U.S. Grant III and Jonathan Daniels ran two of the divisions at OCD.
WILCOX: Walter Laves was the head of the division that I worked in and I was associate director. Our job, as I said, was to help to develop a better understanding of the war effort among our people. We accomplished that working through the local defense

councils, and working with the media, and issuing pamphlets of one kind or another. It was a public relations job.
RITCHIE: Did you know Frances Knight at all at that time? She became head of the Passport Office later, but she was handling public relations for the OCD.
WILCOX: I didn't know her very well at that time. I knew her better later on when she was in the State Department.
RITCHIE: It was an interesting agency in that it brought together a lot of very different types of people.
WILCOX: Well, that's understandable, because a lot of people were interested in helping with the war effort, and you had to find places for them, where they could fit in and do something constructive and helpful.
RITCHIE: In 1943 Landis left to go to the Middle East. His feeling was that the threat of attack on the United States had diminished and the functions of the Office of Civilian Defense really were beginning to phase out. I see that you also left after a relatively short time there.
WILCOX: Yes, because as a matter of fact our activity was terminated. The budget was cut and our activity was considerably

reduced. I joined the Bureau of the Budget at that time. It was then called the Bureau of the Budget, it's now the Office of Management and Budget.
RITCHIE: How did you wind up in the Bureau of the Budget?

WILCOX: Well, they were looking for somebody in the field of international relations to tackle the problem of future foreign aid programs and that kind of thing, and international organization coming out of the war. This was something that interested me. There was a small group under Sherman Shepherd that was concerned with this problem, in the division of management under Don Stone. We had a very capable group of fairly young people who had been interested in international affairs, most of them coming from the academic world. We worked together beautifully as a team, and I enjoyed my work there very much. What we did was to try to help various agencies of the government organize themselves to do a more effective job in the international field.
RITCHIE: You were specifically planning for American expenditures for foreign aid?
WILCOX: Our job wasn't so much in the expenditure field, the appropriation field, as it was in the management field, how to organize, how to run, and how to manage the different activities that were being carried on. Some of the departments and agencies had been

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set up rather quickly, you see, as part of the war effort. They needed to settle down and to think through more carefully how they could do their jobs better. This was our task, to give them advice and counsel.
RITCHIE: I looked at the Bureau of the Budget records for the years when Landis was head of the Civil Aeronautics Board after the war, and the Bureau of the Budget did a major study of how that board operated and made very strong recommendations about how it could improve its operations. I hadn't realized how much the Bureau of the Budget did in terms of analyzing structure and work flow and all the rest. Unfortunately, very few of the proposals for that agency were actually adopted.
WILCOX: Well, you had to assume that your recommendations might or might not be accepted by the agency involved, but we had a fairly good batting average. We assumed that if one-third of our proposals were accepted and put into practice that would not be too bad.
RITCHIE: Did you find that most of your work was oriented toward State Department activities?
WILCOX: A good deal of it had to do with State Department activities, the organization of the State Department and the foreign service and other areas of concern to the State Department, foreign economic programs, that sort of thing.
RITCHIE: Well, then in 1945 you moved to the Legislative Reference Service at the Library of Congress, which was the forerunner of the current Congressional Research Service.
WILCOX: Before that I went in the Navy.
RITCHIE: Oh, you did go in the service?
WILCOX: The Navy wanted me to help with their training program. Since I had been in the teaching field, they thought that my talents could be used there,

whatever they were. So I want in BUPERS, the Bureau of Personnel, to help with the training program. I was there for a little over a year.
RITCHIE: So you were in uniform?
WILCOX: Yes. Here in Washington.
RITCHIE: What was your rank?
WILCOX: I reached the exalted rank of Lieutenant, j.g. My eyes weren't good enough to go to sea, so they put me in the training program, and I was there for thirteen months. My first job was to

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take a good look at the thirty-five cooks and bakers schools in the Navy and recommend a curriculum or program of study for them! Just as I was about to be promoted, Ernest Griffith from the Legislative Reference Service of the Library of Congress came and asked my commanding officer if he could take me out of the Navy and put me with the Legislative Reference Service. My first job there would be to go to San Francisco to attend the United Nations Conference as advisor to the congressional members of the delegation. I thought that was a much better opportunity than I had in the Navy and I agreed to go with the Legislative Reference Service. I went to the conference with Senator [Tom] Connally and Senator [Arthur] Vandenberg, the two members of the delegation from the Senate, and helped them with their work at San Francisco. It was an interesting experience, and very exhilarating. Everybody was hopeful that we could develop the kind of international organization that would help keep the peace. I think everybody recognized that this would require the cooperation of the great powers, that it would depend to a large extent on what the Soviet Union might be willing to do, but nevertheless there was a hope that out of World War II could come the beginnings of a new era where the kind of cooperation that had won the war might result in winning the peace. So people were hopeful.
RITCHIE: Had you known Ernest Griffith earlier, that he specifically sought you out for this assignment?

WILCOX: Yes, I had known him. I had known him because of my relations in the academic world, and also because he belonged to the same church that I belonged to, the Metropolitan Memorial Methodist Church here in Washington.
RITCHIE: And so he assigned you to go as Tom Connally's assistant?
WILCOX: Yes. I was assistant to both of the senators. More to Senator Connally in a way becaue he was then chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, but also Senator Vandenberg. Since they had no money to pay me from the Foreign Relations Committee, I was loaned to the committee from the Library of Congress for this purpose. After the conference I was fairly well equipped to help get the Charter through the Senate, to help with the Senate debate, and the preparation of the committee report, organize the hearings, and all the other things the Senate had to do with the United Nations Charter. It was a very interesting and exciting time, of course.

RITCHIE: The reason I ask is that I was looking at Connally's memoirs [*My Name is Tom Connally* (New York, 1954)] and there's a line in there where he says that people thought Senator Vandenberg had brought Francis Wilcox on the staff, but he was actually my staff man two years earlier at the United Nations Conference.

WILCOX: Well, there is a little story about that, which may be of some interest. As I have said, Ernest Griffith loaned me to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and I served as consultant to the committee for two years. I was not the staff director, although in fact I did direct the professional work of what staff there was. At the end of the two-year period, the election, of course, returned the Senate majority to the Republicans and Senator Vandenberg took Senator Connally's place as chairman. Senator Connally said to me one day: "Would you like to be the committee staff director? We're going to set up a new staff. Under the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, as you know, we're entitled to set up a professional staff." I replied that I hadn't thought about it, but it would be interesting and I would be glad to consider that. He said, "I think I can talk Old Van"--that's the way he referred to Senator Vandenberg--"I think I can talk Old Van into it. I'll see what I can do." Well, the next day, before Senator Connally had a chance to talk to Senator Vandenberg about me, the senator from Michigan called me in and asked me if I would like to become the director of his new staff. I immediately accepted the invitation. This meant, in effect, that Senator Connally was under the impression that he had gotten me the job, and I was therefore his man; and Senator Vandenberg had asked me, regardless of what Senator Connally had said or done after the event. So, in effect, I was more or less welcomed by both the Senate committee leaders, which put me in a very good

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position, because I was a good friend of Senator Connally and also of Senator Vandenberg. There's nothing more helpful to a Senate staff member than to be *persona grata* to both majority and minority leaders.

RITCHIE: Going back to the United Nations Conference in the spring of 1945, John Foster Dulles also went along as an advisor to the Senate delegation.

WILCOX: Yes. He was a senior advisor to the delegation.

RITCHIE: Were you and he the only two Senate advisors?

WILCOX: Oh, they had a number of technical advisors, of course, in all fields. I don't know how big our delegation was, but Senator Dulles--Mr. Dulles later became senator--Foster Dulles was a senior advisor and consultant, and I was only a junior member of the delegation. But there were, of course, quite a few advisors all together. I'd say there were twenty-five or thirty people who attended the meetings of the United States delegation each day. But there were a good many other junior advisors who did not attend those meetings. I was privileged to attend them all, and therefore kept in close touch with what was going on. I attended the meetings of Committee Three, and the meetings of Committee One,

which Senator Connally was assigned to, and helped him with whatever needed to be done in preparation for these meetings and in preparation for the

meetings of the United States delegation--working with State Department people, of course.

RITCHIE: That whole bringing in of senators onto the delegation really was a break-through for American executive-legislative relations, as opposed to what had happened after World War I. But I wondered, how did a senator function as a representative of the executive? Did they have any kind of independent line, or were they basically presented with the State Department's program?

WILCOX: Well, Senator Connally and Senator Vandenberg had served with Secretary [Cordell] Hull and later Secretary [Edward] Stetinius in advising the department officials, the secretary, and the president, on the future organization of the international community. This was, I think, an attempt on the part of the administration to avoid the difficulties that we had encountered in 1919 after the war, in connection with the Treaty of Versailles, when President Wilson didn't consult adequately with members of the Senate and the Treaty of Versailles was rejected. So this was an attempt to avoid that difficulty and to share the responsibility, share the power at that time, with the members of the Senate who would be responsible for getting the charter through the Senate. It obviously worked very well because both the House and the Senate were represented at San Francisco and the members took a very active part in the work of the United States delegation. The conference was a great success. We

came back to Washington and the two senators were recognized as the authorities in the Senate on the Charter; they had been through all the negotiations, they knew the attitude of the Russians and the other delegations there. So there was no real problem getting it through the Senate--through the Foreign Relations Committee first and then the Senate afterwards.

RITCHIE: Of course, it sort of blurred the whole distinction between the branches and the system of checks and balances to have legislative representatives in basically an executive function.

WILCOX: Yes, I suppose it did. I think that later on this was done to a certain extent. Senator Vandenberg and Senator Connally spent two hundred and thirteen days--as I recall--with Secretary of State [James] Byrnes, negotiating the peace treaties with the satellite countries. I think they found, however, that this took them away from their Senate duties too long at a time, and after that there was a tendency not to get involved in these lengthy negotiations, whereby two senators would go on the delegation to the United Nations General Assembly every other year, and two House members would go in the off-election year. That I think was a very good arrangement, which made a good many senators and congressmen much more aware of what the United Nations was and how it

operated. It helped them both on the Senate floor and in the committees in dealing with United Nations problems and international affairs generally. So

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it's a good thing it seems to me to have this kind of legislative executive cooperation. You might say it's not in keeping with our philosophy of separation of powers, but it's a very good thing for both branches of government, I think, to have this kind of relationship. Even though on the whole the relationship is supposed to be an adversary one, you can still be an adversary and be involved in cooperation at certain stages.

RITCHIE: I was looking through *The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg* [(Boston, 1952)] that there were morning briefings at the Pent-House, which is what he called Stetinius' hotel rooms. Were those the marching orders for the day? Strategy sessions for how to proceed?

WILCOX: No, the Pent-House meetings that he referred to were closed meetings, not open to the whole delegation. They were, I think, for the most part only the members of the delegation proper, or maybe even a part of them, the two senators and House members involved. There were a few of those, and they were very restricted, to settle certain policy issues that they did not want to bring up before the total delegation.

RITCHIE: Connally worked on the committee dealing with the Security Council, and much of its debate centered around the veto power.

WILCOX: Yes.

RITCHIE: But eventually the Soviets excepted the American formula for the veto.

WILCOX: Yes, they did but with some reservations.

RITCHIE: Were you involved in the deliberations on that?

WILCOX: Oh, yes. These problems were discussed very often in the meetings of the delegation. The veto and the Security Council problem was one that came up for considerable discussion. I wrote a piece for the *American Political Science Review* about this a little bit later, but the question was whether we would have a charter with the veto or no charter at all. I think the members of the Senate felt that on the critical issues involving the use of armed forces and on very important substantive issues, the United States would require a veto. Otherwise I think it is very doubtful that the Senate would have approved the charter. So it was agreed that there would be a veto, although the final result was an arrangement whereby procedural questions could be settled on a qualified majority basis, and the substantive issues would require the concurring votes of the five permanent members.

RITCHIE: Senator Connally described in his memoir a dramatic scene in which some of the smaller country delegates were objecting to the veto. He stood up apparently and ripped up a copy of the charter. Were you there when he did that?
WILCOX: Yes, I was there. He was very dramatic, you know, he had a very dramatic approach to political questions anyway. Somebody said he was the only senator who really looked like a senator. But he, in a very dramatic way, said to the members of the UN Committee, "If you want a charter, you can have a charter with the veto or no charter at all." And he tore up the charter in a very dramatic gesture. I think the smaller countries realized that in the Assembly, where the veto did not prevail, they had an advantaged position, too, because they each had one vote. That gave them an advantaged position in the Assembly, whereas the great powers had an advantaged position in the Security Council. So they considered it a reasonably fair trade.
RITCHIE: The irony was that the United States waited thirty years before casting its first veto, and the Soviet Union immediately took advantage of it.
WILCOX: Yes, this was because the United States had pretty general control over what went on in the United Nations in the first fifteen years, at least. We could always count on the support of Latin American countries, our Western European allies, and certain

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other countries. With the exception of the Soviet bloc we had almost unanimous support in the organization. But that changed with the admission of all the new countries from Asia and Africa. They began to throw their weight around and our position changed drastically.
RITCHIE: So, when you came back from that conference you stayed on as consultant to the committee. Did you work actually at the Legislative Reference Service at all, or were you almost entirely with the committee?
WILCOX: Well, I had an office in the Library of Congress, but I did a good deal of my work with the committee because I was attending hearings, preparing reports, and dealing with members of the Senate who were concerned about the charter. I was considered the legislative expert on that subject, since my teaching days had been involved in League of Nations affairs, and since I had been at the San Francisco conference. So I was able to do quite a little in helping to develop a better understanding among the senators of what had gone on at San Francisco and what the United Nations Charter was all about.
RITCHIE: Could you tell me a little bit about what he Legislative Reference Service was like at that stage? It was obviously a very small operation.

WILCOX: It was a relatively small operation. I was the first of the new senior advisors that were created at the end of the war: one on military affairs, one on education, one on agriculture, one on health, one on foreign policy, etc. In the early days of the service, when I was there, one of our big problems was to develop among the members of the House and the Senate a feeling of confidence

in our work. This was a new organization, a new institution. There was some thought that maybe the "brain trusters," as we were called, would attempt to dominate the Senate and the House in some fashion. We had to justify our existence by demonstrating our objectivity, our sincerity, and our intellectual integrity, and to develop effective working relations with the committees of the Congress. This was one of our problems in the early days. It didn't take long--Congress realized they needed expert help--for them to develop confidence in our ability and in our work. As time went on, of course, the demands increased, the inquiries from the House and Senate grew by leaps and bounds, and the staff, of course, was increased quite substantially.

RITCHIE: You were spending a lot of time with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Did you have a counterpart who was working with the House Foreign Affairs Committee, or did you handle that as well?

WILCOX: Well, at that point the House wasn't heavily involved in United Nations activities, treaties being handled by the Senate.

The House committee did develop a professional staff, but they weren't involved particularly in the United Nations activities that we spoke of. They were heavily involved in the Marshall Plan and in the Greek-Turkish aid program, and important legislation of that kind, but they were not heavily involved in the work of the United Nations. Boyd Crawford was the staff director of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and we did work closely with him on various problems.

RITCHIE: Wasn't it really just in the appropriations process that they had a role at all in foreign affairs?

WILCOX: Yes. They certainly didn't get involved in the charter of the United Nations at the early stage. They did later in authorizing funds for the work of the UN and the specialized international organizations.

RITCHIE: You said you were working as a consultant for the committee. What was the staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee like in 1946, before the Reorganization Act?

WILCOX: Oh, it was a really big staff. We had a clerk, Bob Shirley, who taught at the University of Maryland half-time. He was the chief clerk. We had an assistant clerk, Emmett O'Grady, who could take dictation and type, run a stenotype machine, and take care of the office generally. And we had a secretary from Senator

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Connally's office, who devoted half her time to the committee. That was the staff of the Foreign Relations Committee. Now, you can see, at that point there could be no adversary relationship between the two branches of government, because most of the professional work clearly had to be done in the Department of State or in the government somewhere. Speeches had to be written there; committee reports to the Senate were prepared by the executive branch; there was no mechanism really by which the Senate could act independently, or could bring to

bear the kind of helpful advice and counsel that a professional staff could bring. This meant that the Senate committee turned customarily to the executive branch for help. It wasn't until we had created the professional staff that the Senate was in a position to develop an independent judgment of its own, based upon its own sources of information. Of course, in foreign policy the Congress has to get much of the information it needs from the executive branch anyway, but nevertheless you can see that with a staff of only three--two and a half people--the Senate committee could not function very effectively.

RITCHIE: I know the records for the Foreign Relations Committee for most of the 1930s can be fitted into one folder, and someone said the only reason they had that one folder was because it fell down between two file cabinets. We have almost nothing in terms of decent documentation of what the committee was doing at that time. Part of

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it may be that there really wasn't any generation of independent records. What was your impression when you got there and found that the staff was so small?

WILCOX: Well, I found that they needed some help, obviously, and when I was asked to set up the staff we were entitled to hire four professional people under the congressional Reorganization Act, which I proceeded to do. We approached our task in a careful way, not attempting to do too much too soon. But the fact is that shortly after the end of the war, there came a flood of treaties and legislation that needed the attention of the Senate, and the prompt action of the Senate and the House. It was obviously a good thing that we had the beginnings of a staff at that time, because otherwise the Foreign Relations Committee would have been completely flooded. We had the United Nations Charter, the peace treaties with the satellite countries, the peace treaty with Japan, the program of aid to Greece and Turkey, the interim aid program, the Marshall Plan, the NATO Treaty, and a whole host of important issues, including the specialized agencies of the UN--with the exception of the Bank and the Fund which had been approved earlier. But we had a whole host of important issues before the Senate and the House that constituted the base, the pillars for our postwar international relationships.

RITCHIE: When you were appointing these people, did any of the senators make suggestions as to whom you should hire?

WILCOX: No. Senator Vandenberg said to me, "You go hire the best people you can find. I don't want to have anything to say about it. But remember "--with a twinkle in his eye--"I'm holding you responsible." This was obviously a good way to handle the matter, because I was in a position then not to have to take people recommended by other members of the committee, but to go and find the best people who were equipped intellectually and by training to do a good job for the committee, and this is what I proceeded to do.

RITCHIE: Where did you look? Did you look in the State Department, or in the universities?

WILCOX: Yes, both. In a situation like that you tend to turn to those that you know and seek information. We borrowed Carl Marcy from the Department of State for a year or two, and he liked it so much that he decided to stay on. He was very good. We borrowed Frank Valeo from the Legislative Reference Service, and he was with the committee for several years. We borrowed Thorsten Kalijarvi, who had been in the academic world, and he was with us for a period of time. Dick Heindel, who later went to the University of Pennsylvania was another early staff member, as was Alwyn Freeman who later went to the UN. We borrowed Morella Hanson from the Legislative Reference Service. We borrowed her, and she was so good she stayed. So, it depended upon whom we could find among qualified people who were available--individuals who had had some experience in the field

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related to the work of the Foreign Relations Committee. But I hasten to say, I did not inquire of any of them whether they were Republican or Democrat. I just hired the people who could do the job.

RITCHIE: And you never felt any pressure from the committee?

WILCOX: No, not the slightest.

RITCHIE: In 1946, George Galloway was working with Senator La Follette and Congressman Monroney on the Legislative Reorganization Act. Did you have any dealings with him at that time, or make any suggestions, or work at all on the act?

WILCOX: Yes. I knew George Galloway very well and talked with him on various occasions about the problems of organization and the relations of the Congress to the executive branch. He wrote a very good book on that subject.

RITCHIE: Did you make some suggestions based on what you were seeing going on in the Foreign Relations Committee?

WILCOX: Yes, sure. We talked as professionals one to another and I think we both profited greatly. His rich experience on Capitol Hill was such that he had a good many ideas. We exchanged views about executive-legislative relations, and about the organization of the committee and its relationship to other committees on Capitol Hill, to the Legislative Reference Service, and to the various

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departments of the government. George was a very competent scholar, and an able observer and analyst.

RITCHIE: Did the reorganization work out the way you had hoped it would?

WILCOX: Yes. I think so--with some exceptions. It was our feeling that we did not need to duplicate all of the offices and bureaus in the Department of State or in the United States government. We felt that the principal task of the professional members of the staff was to organize hearings, to arrange meetings, to develop the kinds of questions that should be asked of the executive branch people, and to furnish the committee with basic background data that they needed to make good, sound judgments. We did not think it was necessary to have a large staff. We got along reasonably well-despite the heavy legislative

burden--with four top professional staff people. I recognize that as time has gone by, the over-all legislative burden has increased in the Senate and the House, and senators need more staff help to keep up with this ever increasing load. Eventually, of course, they did decide to provide minority members of the committee with special staff assistants. This departed from what I thought was an important aspect of staff organization, namely the capacity of staff members, and their willingness to serve both Democrats and Republicans with equal ability and interest. But, of course, when the minority members

asked for special assistance, this began to increase the size of the staff. Then special subcommittees were set up, and staff was provided for those activities. So now, the staff is much larger than it was. Indeed, there is quite a lot of complaint in Washington that the staff members on Capitol Hill are running things, that there are too many of them, that they stimulate debate and discussion, and they prepare resolution and legislation that wouldn't be introduced if it weren't for their ambitious interest in moving ahead. There is a lot of criticism, as you know, about the increasing size of the staff on Capitol Hill. I don't mean to be critical myself, for I can see some justification for increases; I'm just explaining the striking difference between 1947 and 1984.

RITCHIE: Do you think that you were successful in creating a bipartisan staff in part because there was a bipartisan feeling on the committee?

WILCOX: Yes, undoubtedly. Of course, one of the factors, I think, was the fact that I was persona grata to both Senator Connally and Senator Vandenberg, and it became a kind of tradition. I served under Vandenberg, Connally, and [Alexander] Wiley, then [Walter] George of Georgia. I served under two Democrats and two Republicans as chief of staff. We tried to develop a tradition along those lines, and it did last for a number of years, but then for reasons which I have explained, the situation did change. If I may go back

and tell you how I got to be "chief of staff"--when Senator Vandenberg asked me to take over the staff responsibility, he said, "Well, what will we call you?" I said, "Oh, staff director or executive director." He said, "It's got to be more important than that. I want to make an impression on the State Department. How about chief of staff. That sounds bigger and better and stronger." I replied, "Well, that sounds a little too military. I don't know, I thought that maybe just staff director would be enough." "No, " he said, "I want you to be an important figure. Let's call you chief of staff." So we settled on chief of staff.

RITCHIE: Do you think it made any difference in your relations with the State Department?

WILCOX: No, I don't think so.

RITCHIE: How *did* the State Department react to having a professional staff on the committee?

WILCOX: There was some question at first. I know when Senator Connally asked the State Department for permission to take me to the United Nations conference in San Francisco, three fairly important members of the State Department staff objected. They thought it would be unwise to take a congressional staff member to San Francisco. Dean Acheson, who was then Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, talked to Senator Connally about it. Senator

Connally explained his position, and Dean Acheson said, "Senator, whatever you want, we'll do." So he went to the State Department and made arrangements for me to go to San Francisco. I think when it was all over, they all felt that it was helpful to have me there because they could not sit on the Senate floor, as I could, and help the senators during the debate. Consequently, it was very advantageous to the State Department, and they began to realize that as time went on, the staff could be very helpful to the Senate and to the administration. If they maintained the proper relationship between State and Capitol Hill and helped the senators to understand foreign relations problems better, this could be very helpful to the executive. But after that, my relations were consistently quite good.

RITCHIE: I was going to ask whether you ever felt any resistance from the State Department in dealing with a staff person rather than dealing with the senator himself?

WILCOX: Well, as time has gone on this has become a real problem. At that time, the Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations would come to see me and talk with me about problems relating to the Senate and the committee. We could work things out together in the mutual interest of both the Senate and the State Department. I don't think there was any resentment that they couldn't see the senators who were, after all, quite busy. I think that the top people could and did see the senators, and I encouraged

this whenever I could. We really need to establish a reasonably close working relationship with the top people on Capitol Hill and in the executive branch. I did my best to encourage that kind of relationship, so that the senators would have a better grasp of the problems involved, and the executive would develop a better understanding of the legislative process. For example, after the General Assembly of the UN began its work, Jack Hickerson, who was then Assistant Secretary of State, and I worked out a formula to enable two senators to attend the meetings of the General Assembly, every election year, and two House members every other year. This proved very beneficial. It helped create a better understanding of the United Nations in the Congress. Two people went every year. This experience was very rich because they could see, at first hand, how negotiations took place and they could even take an active part in negotiations. They developed a greater knowledge about, and a greater interest in, foreign policy. It was to the mutual benefit of the Senate and to the State Department. That kind of thing can be

facilitated if you have the proper working relationships between the staff on Capitol Hill and the staff downtown.
RITCHIE: Another question I had about the formation of the bipartisan staff. I always wondered if the fact that the Republicans won the election in 1946 and came in as the majority party for the first time in sixteen years, made them more willing to accept the new scheme of things under the reorganization. Do you think it perhaps

went more smoothly in the sense that the majority was new and so was the staff? Or do you think both parties were willing to accept the new order?
WILCOX: Well, I think there was a consensus in our country at that time about what we needed to do in the world. Everybody wanted to become a member of the United Nations. There were only two votes against the Charter. Once they understood what the issues were--they debated it at considerable length, of course--but once they understood the issues they were willing to go in. Only two votes against it. One was Senator [William] Langer of North Dakota. Somebody asked him why he voted against the charter and he said, "Well, if I'd voted for it, I'd have been one out of ninety. I voted against it and I was one out of two. My name was on the front page of every newspaper in the country." That's the reason he voted against the United Nations Charter. But in any case, I think the fact that there was a consensus, and that Senator Connally and Senator Vandenberg had worked together in bringing the UN Charter to fruition, I think that that was a very important factor.
RITCHIE: I also noted that just about the time you came on the staff, the committee released a major study that you had worked on in your capacity with the Legislative Reference Service, on Soviet foreign policy.
WILCOX: Yes, I recall.

RITCHIE: How did that get initiated? What was the impetus behind that?
WILCOX: I don't remember now. I remember I did it with Sergis Yacobson, who was a Soviet specialist attached to the Legislative Reference Service. I don't recall now the precise origin, but it seemed at the time to be a timely thing, because we were talking a lot about the Soviet relationship to the United Nations and to other important developments in the postwar period. I think it was a good study and it was worthy of publication because it helped to develop a better understanding of the Soviet Union in that early period--but I don't remember precisely how it started.
RITCHIE: It was a very tough statement.
WILCOX: Yes, a rather tough report--but fairly accurate as we have seen with each passing year.
RITCHIE: That Soviet policy was expansionist and aggressive.
WILCOX: Yes.
RITCHIE: That they would use any card in the deck.

WILCOX: It was realistic as time has shown.
RITCHIE: Was it designed in part to galvanize opinion in the Congress?

WILCOX: No, I think it was an attempt to make clear what wasn't clear in the minds of a lot of people, the nature of Soviet Communism and what we might expect from the Soviet Union in our negotiations with them over the years. We had to understand the kind of opposition we were running into.
RITCHIE: Do you think that the members of the committee and the members of the Senate were fully aware of that at the time?
WILCOX: Oh, I think so. As I recall, at the San Francisco conference our delegation wasn't "duped," or misled, or hoodwinked by the Soviet Union. I think they understood pretty fully the nature of the Soviet government and system. But they, I think, felt there was really no alternative but to go ahead along the lines that we were working on, to try to make the United Nations work and to hope that the Soviet Union would see that it was in the mutual interest of the countries involved to prevent war. After all, the Soviet Union had lost, tremendously, twenty million people during World War II, and we all hoped they would take a more positive attitude towards the maintenance of world peace than they subsequently did. But at least we had to understand the nature of the opposition we faced in the postwar period.
RITCHIE: Well, in part there was also a debate in the United States. You had the Henry Wallaceites who were proposing a more cooperative line toward the Soviet Union, rather than a tougher line.

WILCOX: Yes.
RITCHIE: And I was wondering if your study was an answer to that discussion as well?
WILCOX: Oh, not necessarily. As I said, I don't remember how it originated, but I think it was an honest attempt to get the members of the Senate and the House to understand better the nature of Soviet Communism.
RITCHIE: It came out just about the time of the Marshall Plan, the Truman Doctrine, in 1947.
WILCOX: Yes, that's right.
RITCHIE: It arrived in the committee at a very auspicious time.
WILCOX: It got quite a little play in the press.
RITCHIE: Yes, I was just reading some of the accounts of it.
WILCOX: Sergis Yacobson had more to do with it than I did. He was the principal author. I worked on it some, but he was the principal writer. It was a very good piece of work, I think, and I want to give him full credit.

RITCHIE: Well, I think this would be a good breaking point, since you had just come on the committee. I'd like to take another session to discuss being on the committee and working for Vandenberg and Connally.

End Interview #1